

WGN AM RADIO INTERVIEW WITH STEVE COCHRAN
May 23, 2007

CNO: Hi. Hi, Steve. I'm actually great. How are you?

Steve: (Inaudible) ... Thank you for joining us today.

CNO: Thank you.

Steve: In regards to the war on terror -- the war in Iraq -- how about you Navy guys? Talk about your role.

CNO: Well, we actually are focused on helping as much as we can on helping as much as we can on the ground. In fact, I've got over 64,000 sailors deployed around the world today. Forty-one percent (41%) of our navy and 13,000 of those sailors are on the ground in the Central Command theater, and some 5,000 in Iraq in support missions for what's going on in the ground there. I've visited them several times. They're bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and they're making a big difference. They also have routinely received praise from the ground commanders insofar as to what's going on over there. So we're very proud of what they're doing, very much in harm's way.

Steve: Yeah, as you should be, and God bless every of them and their families as well.

CNO: No, and, in fact, I speak often in support of their families, not just in the navy, but all the services these days. They are truly a remarkable people and the family support has never been better. And an extension of that is the support of the American people has been exceptionally strong, and that's really a vital part of making sure our military stays strong in what is a very, very challenging time.

Steve: Yes, sir ... Admiral Mike Mullen, again the Chief of Naval Operations. The Chicago Memorial Day parade is this Saturday at noon. Now, how did you come by being the Grand Marshal?

CNO: Well, actually, the mayor asked me to do this. I visited Chicago a few months ago. I was visiting a couple of great schools, our Junior ROTC schools, and, particularly, some schools that are really giving some young, disadvantaged kids a real opportunity. When I saw the mayor I had a great discussion with him about his commitment to education of our young people, and it's something I'm very committed to. Not too long after that, he asked me to be the grand marshall in the parade, and it's a real privilege to do this. Chicago's a great navy town. In fact, it's in my roots. My father grew up in Chicago, so it's really a spectacular opportunity for me to come back and to do this. We have 56,000 recruits just down the road in Great Lakes that were trained there last year. So we're really looking forward to it.

Steve: Now, you've done a lot of amazing things in a blessed career, but have you ever been a Grand Marshal?

CNO: No, I've never been a Grand Marshal.

Steve: How do you feel about your training? Do you feel you are ready?

CNO: Well, I think so. I'm doing a lot of preparation, and mostly hope to represent all the men and women who are serving so courageously around the world.

Steve: All right. Well, again, I thank you for your service. I salute you and every one of the folks in your command. You know, we just don't stop and think enough about all the Navy contributions. I'd love to have you on again and give you a little more time so you can brag about your people.

CNO: Well, I'd love to do it. We got over 400,000 young men and women that are really making a difference and they're terrific.

Steve: Well, Admiral, good luck with your parade here next week.

CNO: Okay.

Steve: And remember to stretch before the parade.

CNO: Thanks, Steve. Take care.

Steve: You're welcome ... Admiral Mike Mullen.

CNO: Bye-bye. (End of transcript).